13 September 2007

Original: English

Committee on Conferences
Substantive session of 2007

Draft report

Addendum

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IV. Impact on meetings held at Headquarters during the implementation of the capital master plan, strategy IV (phased approach)

Introduction and overview

1. At its 484th and 485th meetings, on 10 September, the Committee on Conferences considered the section of the report of the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences concerning the impact on meetings held at Headquarters during the implementation of the capital master plan, strategy IV (phased approach) (see A/62/161, paras. 49-51). As the document chain was complex and highly integrated and General Assembly mandates regarding documentation unyielding, it had been decided that the best course of action was to keep the operation intact by relocating all language staff, including translation services, editors and text-processing units, to the temporary swing space located at 305 East 46th Street for the duration of the implementation of the capital master plan. In addition, a portion of staff from the Executive Office and the Information Management and Technology Unit would be at the swing space location for administrative and technical support. The timing of the move was currently planned for the third quarter of 2008, but could be postponed until the first quarter of 2009, after the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, if delays in implementation of the plan warranted it. The goal was to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of documentation in all six official languages, according to the principle of equal treatment of all languages. To that end, a working group comprising focal points from every functional group had been formed. The next phase of planning would involve focal points from each individual unit slated to move.

2. A representative of the Capital Master Plan Office reported that the design phase of the project was moving forward while the owner of the rental space performed demolition and cleanup. Once that work was completed, construction of

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the new office space would begin. The projected duration of occupation of the space would continue through 2013, although that date was still tentative.

Discussion

3. Satisfaction was expressed that the planning for the move of language staff to the swing space would ensure a seamless transition that would not adversely impact the provision of documentation. In response to questions regarding the logistics of moving some 750 staff members, the representative of the Capital Master Plan Office said that a relocation project management firm is being engaged to coordinate the details. Staff would move sequentially by groups, usually over a weekend, in accordance with the workflow and the limitations on volume imposed by the capacity of elevators in the new space. The construction manager, appointed 30 July, is working on developing an updated schedule. The next annual report of the Secretary-General, to be issued in the near future, would contain updated information for the project.

4. The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management would be operating from four different locations for the duration of the project: the swing space, the temporary conference building, the basement and second floor of the existing conference building and at 2 United Nations Plaza. Concerns were therefore expressed about maintaining the necessary level of information technology infrastructure in all those locations, which would be addressed in some measure by the addition of two P-3 information technology posts.

5. Replying to questions regarding expenses for the swing space covered under the capital master plan budget, the representative of the Capital Master Plan Office said that one-time costs, such as the cost of disconnecting and reconnecting existing computers and other equipment, and up to $500,000 for the purchase of new furniture had been included, although most of the existing furnishings would be re-used unless a cost-benefit analysis indicated that purchasing new furniture and equipment would be more cost-effective. The costs of the relocation project management firm were also included.